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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [KDEM](#) [CB](#)  
SUBJECT: MU SOCHUA ON SRP CONCERNS: VOTER REGISTRATION,  
ANTI-CORRUPTION LAW, MEMORIAL STUPA

REF: A. (A) PHNOM PENH 778  
[1](#)B. (B) PHNOM PENH 765

[1](#)1. (SBU) Sam Rainsy Party (SRP) Secretary General Mu Sochua met with the Ambassador on June 22 to revisit the ongoing problem of voter registration obstructions in preparation for the 2008 national elections. Mu Sochua detailed National Election Committee (NEC) unresponsiveness to SRP's concerns that the voter registration process systematically favors the ruling party (ref A). SRP proposed a possible solution to the NEC: instead of allowing the politically-aligned and locally influential village and commune chiefs to register voters, assign agents from each of the political parties to form voter registration teams that go door to door. The SRP is also pushing the NEC and the Ministry of Interior (MOI) to de-politicize the voter identification system by disposing of the "Form 10/18" as a means of voter i.d. Commune-level authorities are mandated to issue the form 10/18 to villagers who have not had the opportunity to apply for and/or receive their official, MOI-issued national identification cards. SRP claims that the majority CPP commune-level authorities prevent non-CPP villagers from obtaining their due form 10/18. They also claim that, during the April 1 commune council elections, commune chiefs and clerks issued 10/18 forms to individuals who were not on their commune's voter list thereby fraudulently allowing additional voters in their communes. The Ambassador will discuss the issue of voter registration with Minister of Interior Sar Kheng.

[1](#)2. (SBU) Mu Sochua and the Ambassador discussed mutual frustration over the anti-corruption law still languishing with the Council of Ministers. The Ambassador reassured Mu Sochua that he has raised, and will continue to raise, the issue with Deputy Prime Minister Sok An. However, in past discussions, Sok An has insisted that Cambodia's penal code be passed first and then the RGC can move forward with the anti-corruption law. Mu Sochua delivered to the Ambassador a copy of the SRP statement to the June 19-20 Cambodia Development Cooperation Forum (formerly the Government-Donor Coordination Committee meeting). In addition to points on the anti-corruption law, the statement recommends the RGC and donors focus on the following: deforestation, land issues and evictions, judiciary reforms, independence of the NEC, and a law to manage future oil revenue.

[1](#)3. (SBU) Mu Sochua communicated the SRP's strong intent to save the memorial stupa commemorating a 1997 grenade attack on an SRP rally (ref B). When the Ambassador stated his concern over the possibility of the stupa being removed secretly in the middle of the night, Mu Sochua responded

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adamantly that this would result in an ugly fight. She said the party would mobilize supporters, bringing SRP villagers and workers to Phnom Penh to object to the stupa's removal.

She rejected the Phnom Penh Governor's argument that Buddhists do not traditionally build monuments to the dead in public places stating the stupa is not just a symbol but a place believers regard as a home for souls of those who lost their lives at the location. The Ambassador expressed his support for the stupa staying put. Unfortunately, his letters to the Phnom Penh Governor, MOI and MFA have not yet produced a favorable response. The Ambassador intends to now raise the matter with Prime Minister Hun Sen when they meet on Monday, June 25 with the message that removing the memorial stupa would make Cambodia look bad in the eyes of the international community.

MUSSOMELI